PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI

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Charivaria

LIFE has its compensations. The departure from the white bread standard should at least lend a little more colour to the sausages.

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The railways look forward to the peace years with confidence, we are told. Although it may take a big advertising campaign to persuade potential passengers that they *can* travel at Easter.

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". . . the vivacious, dark-eyed Rita J——, of Ealing, who rose to tennis eminence while playing for eight years with a broken rib."
Evening Paper.

Never even had it restrung?

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A man in an American court gave his name as Huh-Huh. That, and a silk handkerchief, is how most people polish their glasses.

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A parrot that originally came from German East Africa in 1913 has escaped from a provincial Zoo. Its recapture is considered merely a matter of time as the bird speaks very little English.

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A ventriloquist appearing in London has a dummy as big as himself. HITLER, however, still sticks to GOEBBELS.

o o

"I can remember when the present HOME SECRETARY took his lunch to work wrapped in a newspaper," says a correspondent. Would it be in order to ask which one?

It appears that an Austrian peasant has been in trouble for naming a pig "Hitler." Just as though the pig really cared.

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As we go to press it is expected that Vichy, in order to avoid any suggestion of dictation by Germany, will shortly declare its determination to reinstate M. LAVAL.

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"My heart trailed Sytor and Janai with its tail between its legs."—*From "Synthetic Men of Mars," by E. R. Burroughs.*

On Mars you never know *what* will happen.

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"GOERING is not the type of man to commit suicide," says a writer. A pity. He could hardly miss.

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An M.P. has been run down by a constituent on a bicycle. The cyclist now claims to have a clear understanding of his Member's views.

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Bearing in mind the FUEHRER'S vow about Russia, Signor MUSSOLINI has now decided not to leave Italian soil except in case of invasion.

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Many Home Guard units use cycles which they provide themselves. Lord CROFT, however, is in favour of puncture outfits being issued to them.

Needs Must

HAIL, Poverty, by every wise man sung!
Begone, vile Luxury, I do detest thee!
Into the horrid shades of night be flung
Although in fact I never yet possessed thee.

Who that has ever turned a poet's page
Can fail to share his light contempt for riches?
Pundit, philosopher and saint and sage
Have worn rough underwear although it itches.

Come, Virtue, then, and come, Sir Kingsley Wood,
Come, Woolton pies, although a trifle greasy.
The art of being strong and brave and good
When made compulsory is much more easy.

Come, Abstinence, with thine innocuous cup
And sweet Simplicity devoid of splendours,
And Laughter holding both her stockings up
For want of fresh elastic for suspenders.

Give me the soldier's meals, the soldier's tent,
The rough rude life, the complicated weapons,
And let the landlord who demands my rent
Get what he may out of my one and threepence.

Beshrew thee, Opulence, unlovely maid!
This is no hour for dandies nor for gluttons.
Come, gentle Thrift, and come, O Board of Trade
And tear away my pockets and my buttons.

So with divine Austerity content
Up with the lark I'll sing my morning orison
To every member of the Government
Even including Mr. Herbert Morrison. EVOE.

o o

Ah, the English!

"IS that you, Caroline? My dear, what a piece of luck! I *never* thought you'd be in when I rang up. No one ever is in nowadays, though of course they're never out either, because of having no petrol. I do so want to hear your news. . . . Oh, no! one never sees one's husband, I know. . . . I hope he likes the Home Guard better than poor William likes his A.R.P. . . . Well, other people always *are* a trial. I must say, I often wonder if they feel the same things about us as we feel about them, and if so it's frightfully difficult to see how we're to be a really *united* nation, as we ought to be. . . . Yes, she's a Wren, and we don't really know where she is at the moment or what she's doing. How's your girl getting on? . . . Oh, *definitely*. I think it's a *really* becoming uniform, and they're doing such marvellous work.

"Now, Caroline, do tell me if you know anything about *fish*. He says he can't deliver, and the milk can't take it because he only comes on the wrong days, and we can't fetch it because we can only drive into the town once a fortnight, and that's the wrong day too. I mean, it's *got* to be on the day the grocer says he can't come our way. We take alternate weeks with the grocer—either he calls here, or we call there, but we've got to let *him* choose the day. . . . Yes, I'd already thought of the newspaper man, but he's frightfully old, and he doesn't think he could manage fish as well as the newspapers, and anyway he only leaves them at the milk-churn-stand nearly a mile away and we have to go and get them there. . . . No, they don't. Partly because we haven't had any rain, and partly because I always leave a large sponge-bag there, and he puts them inside. I must say, I often think it's a risk, now that one can't get sponge-bags any more—but no one has touched it so far. But I do think *fish* lying about would be asking for trouble.

"Then there's another thing, Caroline. My sister in London tells me she can definitely get elastic—no Black Market, or anything wrong—but just ordinary *elastic*, that a friend told her about in a place she saw as she went past on a bus. She says her friend simply had a kind of feeling: *That shop had got elastic*—which I may say she'd been looking for all over the place for weeks—and she got off the bus then and there, and remembered to put her ticket in the place near the conductor and everything—and *leapt* off and into the shop—and got several yards. Narrow white elastic, but they had pink as well. So when I heard all this I thought about you at once, because I know you were looking for it last month, and if you'll write direct to my sister she'll get some for you, if there's any left. . . .

"Oh, yes, Caroline, I've been doing the cooking for ages, but I'm terribly lucky. I've found a girl to come and help me three days a week. We can manage the P.G.s and the evacuees and William between us, and the only *real* difficulty will be if William's grandmother decides to come here for the duration, as she's threatening to do. She's only waiting really because she can't find anywhere to store her furniture, or anybody to move the things she wants to bring with her, or someone to travel with her from Yorkshire, or anyone to take her St. Bernard dog. I suppose you wouldn't like a really *lovely* St. Bernard dog, Caroline? I believe they don't really eat a very great deal. . . . No, very well. I quite understand. I dare say I shall hear of someone at the W.V.S. Depôt or the Convalescent Home or the Red Cross Sewing Party. And you can't suggest anything about fish? . . . No, I only thought we might perhaps do something between us, if you take the children into school and could pick it up and leave it at Wortlebury-Ogden post office, and then William could do something on his way past and perhaps drop it at the bus stop, and there's a farmer's wife in the village who goes in most days and would be quite ready to get it as far as the village, and I could probably manage to call for it if I can get my bicycle mended. The trouble is that it's a pre-nineteen-fourteen one and some parts of it are missing and they say they won't be able to get them till after the war. . . . Yes, very difficult indeed, and of course I mind about the white bread *dreadfully*, and poor William is so disappointed because not one of the hens will lay a single egg. I think myself they're Fifth Columnists *of the worst kind*, going on like that. But there it is, one has to remember that there's July to look forward to. . . . No, Caroline, of course I don't mean the invasion. Why should I look forward to that, when I've got to help with the First Aid and the fire-fighting and the stretcher-bearing and the communal cooking and the housing of refugees, all at the same time? Besides, I think myself they'll be here long before July.

"I only meant that in July the ration-books are all going to be made simpler, and that'll be such a help."

E. M. D.

BIGGER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL BUDGETS

"I find the work delightful."

"How does that book you lent me finish? The doctor said I could get up this afternoon."

We Must Do Something About John.

"WHAT a pity," said Aunt May, "because we've *been* to that. It is quite the best piece in town at the moment. *The Luckless Heart*? Do you really think you would care for a play? However, it's *your* evening and I *do* want you to choose. *Gangplank*? I'm sorry, but I don't feel I could stand it. These blaring pieces upset me. Of course it's not for me to say, but I feel I could only bear something quiet, amusing and *sympathique*. . . ."

This, broadly speaking, was how Aunt May, Cousin Evelyn and myself came to be sitting in Row P, 13, 14, 15 at a revue which none of us really wanted to see. It is a curious fact, but this always happens when one is told to choose whatever theatre one likes.

Mind you, I am very fond of Aunt May. No one knows the stores of Kensington and Knightsbridge better than she. If you want soap-flakes, acid drops, razor blades, or a wee drop of pre-war sherry that has been forgotten, she is the person to approach. It is just that she isn't the ideal person to go to the theatre with.

"We are going to enjoy this," she said with determination as we sat down. "Now, John, are you *sure* you can see?"

"Beautifully."

"I don't see how you *can*," roared Aunt May, throwing her voice to the back of the pit, "not when that girl in front is wearing such a ridiculous hat. *Say*, if you'd like to change. Just *say* . . ."

Pre-curtain talk at the theatre almost always seems to run like this. It is based on the fact that you are sure the other person cannot see as well as you and, far from rejoicing in the fact, you insist on changing places. You then find yourself with a magnificent view and you say: "Is that better?"

And your companion answers: "Heaps."

The trouble is that no one ever dares talk much in the theatre in case the man in the row behind should hear. You are always certain of this because you are listening to what the man in front is saying to *his* companion. As a matter of fact he is usually asking her whether she can see properly.

We went through all this religiously. At any rate, I comforted myself, it will be better when the show starts.

We had chosen a revue and, all war-time revues being much the same, we knew exactly what to expect. The show would start with an opening chorus which lamented the following facts:

(*a*) That there should have to be an opening chorus.
(*b*) That everyone writes a better opening chorus than this one.

It then finishes by saying it isn't an opening chorus at all and the way is clear for the comedian to impersonate a sergeant and the leading man to appear as a colonel in the A.T.S.

It all went according to plan and I settled back to enjoy myself. This would have been a simple process, involving nothing more than turning to Aunt May and saying "Terribly good" at decent intervals, had not the question of opera-glasses cropped up.

These opera-glasses sit in a trap which you discover when you try to put your cigarette out on it. If you are with your wife you say either: "You don't want these things, do you?" or "Have you got sixpence?" Being with Aunt May, however, I considered the least I could do would be to produce a pair.

From that moment my peace was gone. No sooner did I have my turn to scan the leading lady at close quarters than either Aunt May or Cousin Evelyn had a yearning to be looking too. No sooner did Aunt May get settled down to her survey than I myself urgently required the glasses back. In fact we spent most of the First Act running a small shuttle service between ourselves.

To cover my growing agitation I took out a cigarette. This betrayed a fresh manifestation in the war of nerves, viz., that there is no one in the world who does not believe that his lighter lights better than anyone else's. No sooner was the cigarette in my lips than all three of us had whipped out (and lit) our lighters. Aunt May's was an ancient model, full of cogwheels, resembling in general design an old Suffolk mill. When she twirled it there was a shower of bright sparks. I like

THE LETTER OF THE LAW

YOU obey it by taking care not to burn or destroy Waste Paper. Are you doing your best to obey the spirit of the law too, by finding and putting out for collection every scrap of waste paper you have?

to think that my lighter was the winner but, whether it was or not, between us we produced a miniature conflagration that seemed to illuminate the entire auditorium.

It made us so conspicuous that I was quite relieved to escape just before the interval in order to *make sure* that we had a taxi after the show.

"I'll try," said the commissionaire darkly. "Ask for No. 9."

Of the Second Act I need say no more than that Aunt May produced some sandwiches. This, I suppose, is the inevitable result of theatres starting in the late afternoon. There is no law, I fancy, which debars an officer from eating sandwiches in public, even with a rather superior private sitting in front of him. It is just that I wished Aunt May's sandwiches had not been wrapped in grease-proof paper. Nothing, not even an air-raid, is louder than grease-proof paper when unwrapped during a sentimental song sung by a soprano.

By the time I had recovered sufficient strength to look at the stage I had totally missed the sketch with the leading man dressed as a Wren. I know he must have been funny too—because several girls shrieked in the gallery just as they do in Workers' Playtime—though why they come to the theatre when they have so much fun in the factories is more than I can say.

I imagine the concluding item must have been good too, but we all rose in the middle of it in order to get away before the rush. Facing us was a door marked EXIT and Aunt May darted through it like a snipe.

"This is the quickest," she said.

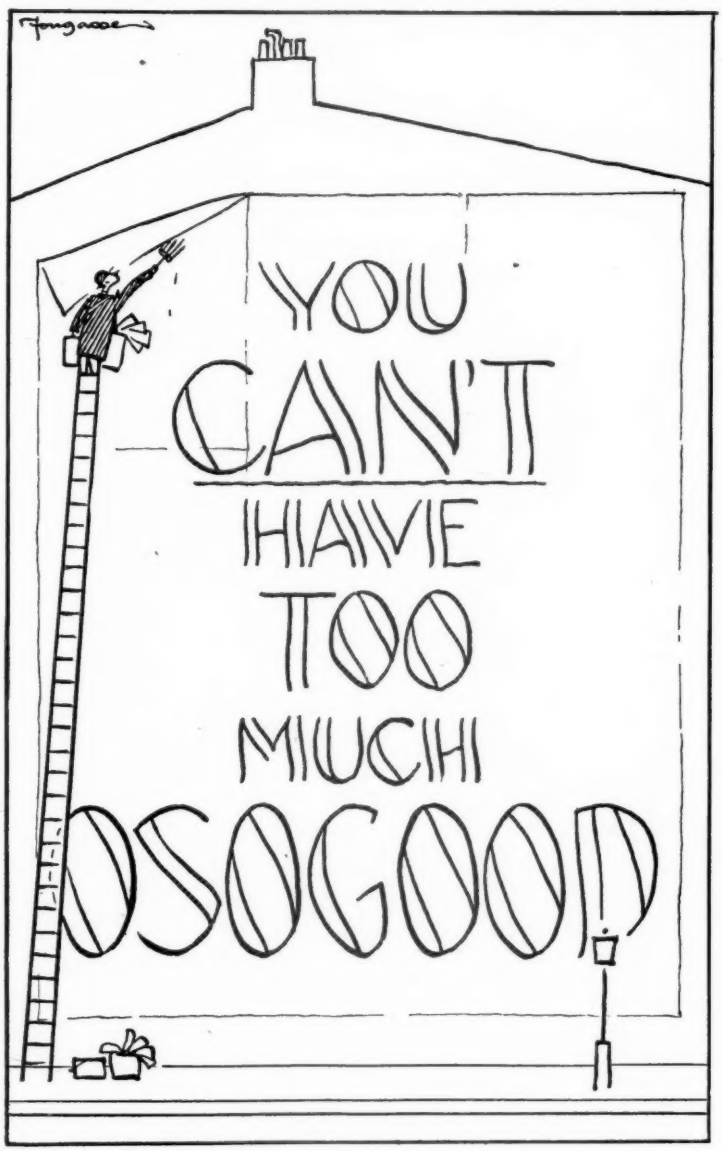
Dutifully we climbed a number of stairs, walked through a deserted bar, passed the cloakroom, doubled back through the bar and finally emerged in a pitch black side-road. It goes without saying that each of us thought the other had a torch. We wasted a lot of time when Aunt May insisted that she knew the way and walked us into an A.R.P. post.

By the time we had retraced our steps to the foyer all hope of No. 9 had gone. In fact I was very short with the commissionaire until I discovered he was a brigadier. . . .

Next week there is an E.N.S.A. show in the Mess. I only hope that someone asks me whether I can see properly. I shall know exactly what to say. I couldn't exactly express it in the warm letter of thanks I wrote to Aunt May. . . .

ANOTHER CHANGING FACE

THE ADVERTISING ANGLE



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At the Pictures

Not Exactly New

From the heap of commercially "big" films recently or still in London one might pick *Johnny Eager* (Director: Mervyn LeRoy) as the most exciting. It's some time, I think, since we had a "big" gangster picture; there can seldom have been one more smoothly or efficiently produced. There is even a certain subtlety about one aspect of the theme, although I need hardly say it is dressed up with enough suspense, gun-play, tough talk and high-powered passion to entertain the most boneheaded customer all the time. Basically the story is about a racketeer (Robert Taylor) and a rich girl (Lana Turner), and those names alone, of course, will attact thousands more fans than will be put off by that description of the story. It is a story we have been told several times since we saw Spencer Tracy in *Quick Millions* . . . was it ten years ago? . . . but the emphasis here is different. This is also something of a character-study, of a completely selfish, hard young man who in the end, after all, succumbs—(yes, that *other* familiar old story).

The detail is as good as ever. The three or four soft-hatted men emerge from the car in the dark street and file menacingly into the doorway . . . the lights of the "elevated" train slide across the houses opposite . . . and so on. (Bang! bang!)

Mr. Taylor capably plays the dog-track racketeer sadly described by one girl as "a character that can always have an accident," and Van Heflin is outstandingly good as his brandy-sodden friend, his only friend, who unerringly sees the approach of doom when *Johnny* inquires who *Cyrano* was. "Are you starting to encounter *literate* dames?" and "That blessed damozel'll have you over a barrel, amigo."

It would be sensible perhaps for these notes to ignore what is advertised as "the new Miranda picture," for it is by no accident but the most calculated box-office design that each succeeding one is made as nearly as possible like the others. But by the same token the formula must be very popular; if people will go to see it again and again, they may be grateful to be told that it is almost exactly what they have liked before. In *Week-End in Havana* (Director: Walter Lang) we have Havana instead of Rio, John Payne instead of Don Ameche . . . but the same flashing (and admittedly very well managed) colour expended on hotel and cabaret and travelogue scenes, with one or two brilliant concerted numbers and a few songs; and the same old misunderstanding-routine does duty as a plot. It seems that this girl (Alice Faye) saved up for her holiday and then found it spoilt when the cruise-ship ran aground, so the steamship company sent John Payne, who was on the point of being married, to get her to sign . . . oh, well, never mind. Then there is Cesar Romero; and Carmen Miranda, crackling and flashing with energy, looses forth a song and dance as often as the film may be expected to stand up to it.

[*Week-End in Havana*

ATTACK?

Rosita Rivas . . . . . Carmen Miranda
Monte Blanca . . . . . Cesar Romero
Nan Spencer . . . . . Alice Faye

The old situation turns up again in *Design for Scandal* (Director: Norman Taurog): the man woos for commercial reasons, and the girl's discovery of his infamy and his discovery that he really loves her are almost simultaneous. Here the trappings are very bright and cheery; the routine is almost hidden from view beneath smart dialogue, farcical situations and amusing detail. Walter Pidgeon plays deftly with the always appealing part of the cheerfully unscrupulous newspaperman; Rosalind Russell is pleasantly stern as an upright judge who is prevailed upon to sway a little from the perpendicular; and the sun, so far as I recall, shines all the time.

[*Design for Scandal*

COURTING

Judge Graham . . . . . Guy Kibbee
Judge Cornelia Porter . . . . . Rosalind Russell
Jeff Sherman . . . . . Walter Pidgeon

I must admit I found *Manpower* (Director: Raoul Walsh) more entertaining than any of these. This one hundred minutes of hokum is about the strenuous and dangerous lives and loves of the men who repair high-tension cables for the Bureau of Power and Light in California, and is full of earthy wise-cracks, some of them very funny. The inevitable triangle consists of Edward G. Robinson, Marlene Dietrich and George Raft; and with thousands of volts leaking about the place, do you have to be told how the odd corner is disposed of?

R. M.

"My batman somehow always manages to scrounge something wherever we are."

Look!

LOOK! Whoopee!
This is me
on a motor-bike!
Isn't it smart? I feel like
goodness only knows what.
I bet you'd give a lot
to be me?
Whee!
This is the first time I have ridden
such a thing, and nearly all the knobs and levers are hidden
mysteries to me; so you see I am rash,
I am wild, I am wonderful, I am cutting a dash.
Oh the glorious air!
Oh the wind in my hair!
Delightful! Doesn't it look delightful?
(As a matter of fact it is rather frightful,
as cold as ice.)
I have already stopped the engine twice,
but a postman and a boy got it started
again and I am very brave. I am lion-hearted.
I go *swish* and *swoosh* and *zoom* and *splutter*.
I just happen to be in the gutter
at the moment because I cannot make up my mind
whether I will stay behind
this bus or come out with a great roar.
Really there are more
buses in this town, and mad dogs, and imbecile
old ladies teetering about in front of my wheel!
But I do not care,
I am all that is gay and debonair;
I am the eagle that soars and the arrow that flies;
I am a golden-haired goddess with eyes
like sapphires; I am a crusader
sent by heaven to outwit the invader.
I can see myself crouched over the handlebars,
hurtling through the night under the stars,
bearing a letter like a St. Bernard in my strong white teeth—
good news from Bristol to Crewe, bad news from Bath to Leith.
I will be Jehu personified;
like a dragon I will eat up the countryside.
Oh the singing and the shouting and the cheering and the crying
as I ride through with my coat-tails flying!
Look at me now! I am going fast!
The trees go *wham wham* as I race past,
I am burning them up like a forest fire!
No, but surely, this speedometer has gone completely haywire,
it registers only nineteen miles an hour!
Hand me a lemon, someone, pluck me a flower! V. G.

The Junier Branes Trust

(By Smith Minor)

IT was Green's idea that we shuold do it, but it was my idea that we shuold do it for an old man with an ailing mother and nineteen children (that's what he told me, honestly), so in a way you cuold call it "Fifty-Fifty," but one's got to admit that I was more kean on Green's fifty than he was on mine.

"We'd get more if we did it for the Red Cross or a Battleship," he said.

"I grant you," I said, "but the Red Cross and the Battleship get more than the old man."

"The old man's got nineteen children," he said, "and that ouht to be enoufh."

"If you had nineteen children you'd think it more than enoufh," I said.

"That's why you won't get me having them," he said. "However, if you're dead sett on it, young Smith, it's O.K. *avec moi*."

"I am rather," I said. "Thanks, old boy."

So we agread on it, and after we'd worked it all out, and mind you that took some doing, we wrote the Notise and put it up on the board, it going thus, *i.e.*:

JUNIER BRANES TRUST

Residant Branes:
Commander Green
Professer Smith

Gest Brane:
Mr. Sidney Popham

Chairman:
THE ENGLISH MASTER
(Honestly!)

Last Day for Questions:
FRIDAY

Day for the Answers:
SATURDAY 3 o'c.

Of corse the gentel reader will be birsting to know what hapened so I will not keap him or her, or both, waiting, but there are three things I think he or she or both ouht to know first, so I will jest tell them quickly, *i.e.*:

(1) You will wonder where the old man's money was coming from, but we thort if we charged for admishun there migtn't be any, so we desided to stick an old hat where everyone cuold see it with this Notise: "This belongs to a pore old man, it being all he has bar 19 children, so if you enjoy yourselves will you put something in it for him, thank you."

(2) You will also wonder, "Yes, but no one sees the real Branes Trust, are these Branes going to be seen?" The answer is no, what we did being to get a very old but very big screan that a rat had knawed a hole throuh and to put a meggiphone throuh the hole the rat had knawed throuh, we then speaking throuh.

(3) And for the third and last time you may wonder weather we meant to immitate the Real Branes or not. Green thort yes, but I thort not, he saying, "I think it wuold be more fun," but I saying, "It won't be fun if we're had up for Lible," he then saying, "Well, I may take the risque if I can get a wack at Pattergonia," and I then saying, "Well, of corse, if you're had up for Lible I'll go with you, only I think we ouht to be careful." So we desided to see what hapened and then to do what we felt.

End of the three things I thort you ouht to know.

Well, came the day, and came 3 o'clock with it, or rather after it, well, anyhow, in it, and here we were seated behind the screan, fealing our diferent fealings. I had wondered what my own fealings wuold be like, to be honest I don't realy know why I do these things, but I found I cuoldn't find any fealings, if you know what I mean, being sort of bnumb. But the English Master, who you've got to admit was jolly sporting to be with us, and who of corse had coleckted all the questions that had been sent, said "Chear up, Professor," and then as three o'clock struck he put his lips to the small end of the meggiphone, wich of corse was the end we had, and said,

"Good afternoon, Everybody. This is Mr. MacBullock speaking, introdusing the Junier Branes Trust. The residant members, as you all know from the Notise, are Commander Green, that well-known person whose future will be even worthier than his past, at least we hope so, and Professer Smith, whose many doings I nead not reckord scince he has lately taken to reckording them himself. Our Gest Brane is Mr. Sidney Popham who last year had the remarkable bating avarage of 0.05. Well, that is the Junier Branes Trust, and these are the questions. The first comes from George Henry Fortiscue Swivvleton, of the Lower Fourth, who asks, 'How many flies can a fly have in a summer?' Professer Smith?"

Me: If the question means what the one fly can have, then the answer is 320, but if it means ading what the 320 can have, and their 320, and so on, then the answer is, for the hole broud, 2,080,320.

English Master: My God. That puts our old man with nineteen children in the shade. Do you agree with Professer Smith, Commander Green?

Green: Well, I don't say Professer Smith's figgure isn't right, but when I was in Pattergonia I met one fly that had had 3,000,008, of corse I can't realy say weather they were all his own.

Of corse I was lucky hapening to know about the flies, being interested in such things scince starting to keap rabits. But the next question didn't seam so easy, it coming from Walter Bosham, of the Upper Fifth, and being, "How far can a man's voice carry?" I think I'd of bosched it, but luckerly the E.M. called on Green first this time, and Green got the answer O.K., *i.e.*:

Green: It depends on how loud the man's voice is, at least that's how it seams to me.

Me: That's how it seams to me, too.

E.M.: And is that how it seams to you, Mr. Popham?

Popham nodded. You see, he hadn't quite worked into it yet. So the English Master went on, his name being Mr. Chester if anyone wants to know, thouh I don't see why they shuold, still, some may,

E.M.: Well, that seams to be all we have to say about that, so we will pass on to the next question wich is of a more serious nachure. It comes from L. Kirk, of the Sixth, who asks, "If you were the Prime Minister, what wuold you do?"

Green: If I was the Prime Minister I'd know, but as I'm not I don't, at least, that's how I see it.

E.M.: A most careful answer, but Professer Smith looks as thuoh he had a little more to say.

"Two singles?"

Me: Yes, I've got six things, becorse as a matter of fact I have often thort about it, for look how we all critisize each other, when shuold we do it unless lo! we know what we wuold do in their place? You say of a master, say, or well of anybody, what a stinking thing to do, but what wuold you of done, and if you don't know how can you say what others shuoldn't, and if with a master, or well anybody, then why not with Prime Ministers?

E.M.: Is that all?

Me: I cuold go on, but do you want any more?

E.M.: Yes, we want the six things.

Me (having forgoten): Oh. Well, (1) I'd put down hunting, how wuold we like to be chaced? (2) I'd gnite anyone if his work was good, even a baker, (3) I'd emport more white mice, this country not seaming to me to have enoufh, (4) I'd make home work what's called oppishunal, (5) I'd stop wars in a way I've worked out but it wuold take too long to explane, and (6) I've forgoten this one, but I'm bowned to remember it presently, and will send it if anyone wants to write for it.

E.M.: I will certinly write for it, and I am sure we feal very grateful to Professer Smith for the five things he has remembered. Popham?

Popham shook his head. One got the idea that he was rather sorry he was here, but mind you, when it comes to histery, you won't find anyone to beat him.

E.M.: The next question comes from Annonnymious, who writes from a place that is new to me, the Lower First, and wants to know weather, if you had hold of a mad bull's tail, you shuold hold on or let go. Commander Green?

Green: Well, I don't know what others think, of corse, but wuoldn't it depend on wich end of the bull was the maddest? I remember one bull's tail I had hold of in Poonah, and as that end was the maddest I let go, at least, that's how it seamed to me.

Now I had ment to go thruogh all the questions, but I see now I can't becorse (a) it wuold make this artickle too long and (b) it might boar you. But I've got to jest tell you the end of the meeting.

After it was all over we went in front of the screan to bow, and found there wasn't anybody to bow to. There'd been a fire a little way off, and they'd all gone to that.

We felt a bit funny.

o o

Beautiful Words of the Past

SAY when.

May we send it for you, Madam?

You will have *two* eggs, won't you, dear?

Plenty of room at the end of the train, Sir.

Got a match?

Can I interest you in this line of silk stockings, Madam?

Do have some more beef, Mr. Smith.

Any more for the *Skylark?*

The butcher-boy, M'm.

Spring! Must order a couple of new suits.

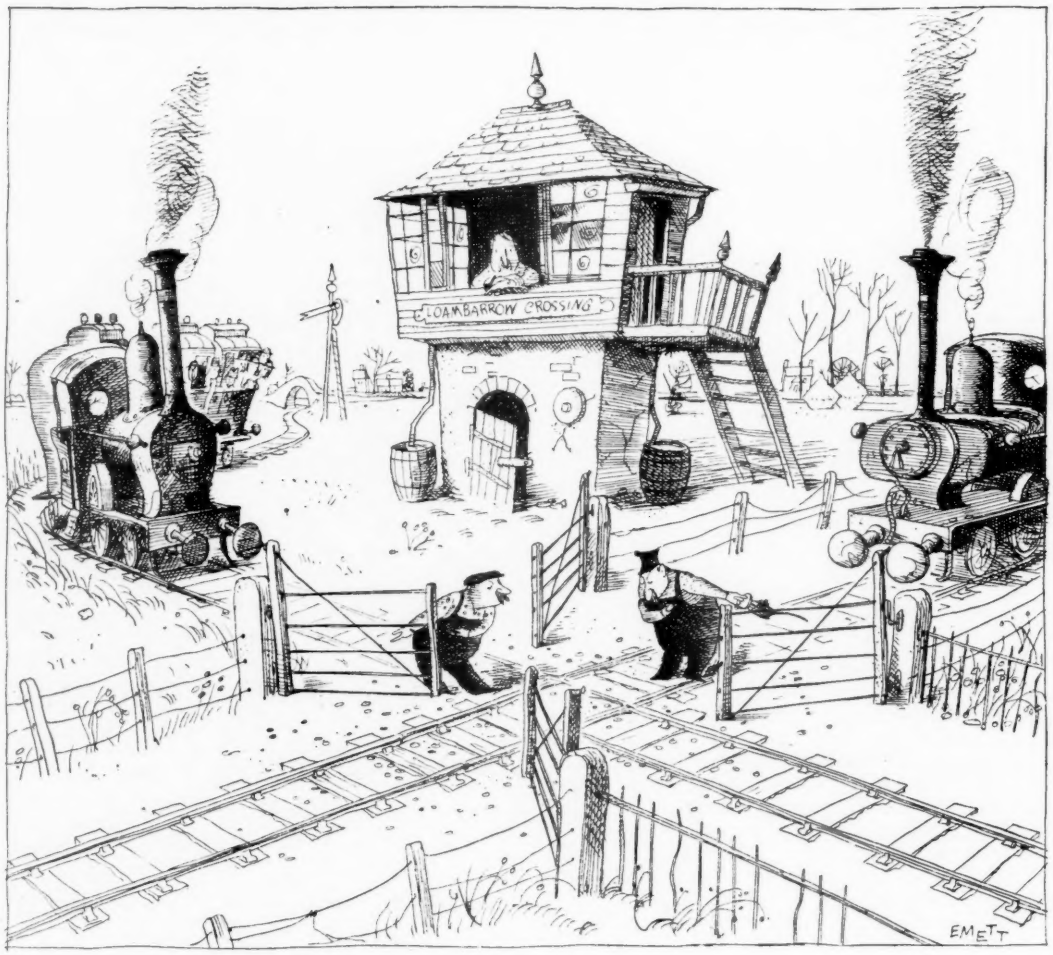
Let's go and look at the lights in Piccadilly.

I think I'll have an orange.

"THEY ALSO SERVE"

THEY are brave, these people who, behind the scenes, whether at home or in the factories, go quietly about their essential tasks. Air-raids, nights in shelters, lost sleep, nerve strain, all is accepted cheerfully, for they are determined to carry on. Even when they are bombed and lose their homes and cherished possessions, their grateful appreciation of the help given them through the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND acclaims the spirit which cannot be broken.

The privilege of service to them is extended to you. Will you help us supply their most urgent needs? If you have helped us with contributions before will you please help us again? If this is your first introduction to the Fund will you please become a subscriber? Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.



Aircraft

LOVELY and famous still are the names of old ships,
(*Victory, Ark Royal, Centaur,* the little *Golden Hind*):
From the heroic past they speak with our fathers' voices
Of courage and the indomitable mind
Till the heart leaps and the spirit within us rejoices.
Honourable and famous too are those others,
New craft, but bound in the same indenture,
To the young hands which guide them faithful, compliant,
Shirking no venture:
Spitfire, Hurricane, Hudson, Halifax, Whirlwind, Sunderland, Beaufort, Blenheim, Defiant.

Airborne, they traverse the zones of night and morning,
Clouds their companions, the sheer heavens their pale.
Against them neither the enemy's stroke nor the wind's rough scorning
Shall at the last prevail:
(*Spitfire, Hurricane, Hudson, Lysander, Beaufort, Beaufighter, Wellington, Blenheim, Defiant*).

Lovely and famous, I think, to them that come after,
Their names shall sound; and the brave syllables ring
With a lingering tone perhaps of the ready laughter
Of crews who swung them to battle, wing to wing,
Meteor-bright their squadrons, in valour's armour reliant,
Steadfast, unfaltering:
Spitfire, Hurricane, Hudson, Halifax, Wellington, Beaufort, Beaufighter, Blenheim, Maryland, Stirling, Defiant.

C. L. M.

THE DELIVERER

"Have no fear: I come to set you free from your chains."

Little Talks

DO you think the population ought to be increased?

Of course.

That's 98 per cent. Do you think that every married couple should have a minimum of four children?

Yes. What? No. Well it depends.

Shall I put you down "Don't know"?

What is all this about?

This is a Haddock Poll, conducted by the Lobster Smack Institute of Guess and Gossip.

Gracious! But don't put me down "Don't know." Everybody knows about the population. Only you ought to make it a bit clearer.

How?

Well, I mean, I can't say straight off about the four children, can I? I must know how many chaps we should have if everybody had four children, and who's going to pay for them, and how; and so on——

Ah, but we don't do that sort of thing in the Polls. You may have noticed that the Other Question is never asked.

What other question?

Well, we might ask you: "Are you in favour of equal pay for women and men?" but we shouldn't dream of asking you: "Are you in favour of abolishing the legal liability of husbands to nourish and support their wives?"

I know. It's like saying "Are you in favour of Peace and Disarmament?" without adding "—even if the other chap is arming and sure to make war?"

Which is precisely what certain people were saying not so long ago. However, don't let's drag that up. Shall I put you down "Don't know"?

No. Put me down "Yes." After all, I've got four myself. Why shouldn't the other chaps do their stuff?

Good. Well, that's 90 per cent.

90 per cent. what?

90 per cent. have said "Yes."

Yes, but 90 per cent. of how many?

Ah, that's telling. We never give that away. But don't worry. It's a cross-section.

Cross my foot! How many have you asked altogether?

Well, I'll tell you in confidence. Ten. There's you and myself and my wife—we've got four, like you, and five grandchildren as well. There's two bachelors, two spinsters——

They're mad keen, I suppose?

They certainly take a pretty serious view of the duties of married couples. And there's a young married couple, childless.

What did they say?

They said "Yes." Only they said: How's it to be done? because he's in the ranks and she's in munitions, there's not room for one child in her flat, and if you have a house you can't get a servant.

Well, I should call them a "Don't know."

Oh, no. They were all for it, in theory.

What about number ten?

That was a rather highbrow child, who was against the whole thing.

What did he say?

He'd been reading some of the modern tripe, and he said that this was not a world fit to bring a decent child into.

Golly!

There's something in it, I suppose.

Nonsense! Apart from an occasional bomb or invasion, it's a much better world for children than it ever was before.

And, as a matter of fact, children don't seem to mind bombs very much.

Ask Charles Dickens which is the fitter world for children—this one or the Victorian, with no bombs or invasions!

No, it's the parents who have the tough time nowadays. A mother of two wrote to *The Times* the other day——

By the way, you haven't got a mother of two in your cross-section, have you?

No. She's highly important, I agree. But this one would have been a "Yes." She'd like to have lots. Only, she said: How on earth is she to do it? As it is, she has to run the house and the children herself, besides doing ambulance, and the Lord knows what. And who's going to look after Nos. 1 and 2 while she's having 3 and 4?

Nursery schools, and all that.

Yes, but they have to sleep somewhere.

It's all very difficult. Wasn't there a Bill about it some time ago?

An Act. The Population (statistics) Act, 1938.

Did that increase the population?

It hasn't even increased the statistics yet, so far as we know, though the Registrar-General may have some thrilling information at the office. But I never thought that measure would fill the empty quivers.

I remember now. You made a disgraceful speech about it.

I made an exceedingly sound speech about it. I was reading it the other day. Here's one thing I said (I was recommending some practical steps):

"The Government might come to the conclusion to give holidays with pay by the sea——"

That's been done—more or less.

"And they might do something to help middle-class parents to pay for the education of their children——"

Well, you get allowances.

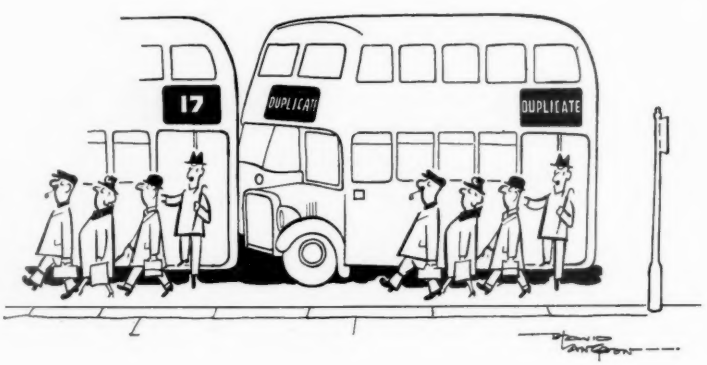
Not after sixteen, when education's really expensive. And, anyhow, what are they? They'd scarcely pay for a skating-lesson! Then I went on: "The Minister might ask the First Lord or the Government what they are doing about the marriage allowance for naval officers——"

That's been done, hasn't it?

I'm not sure. "They might ask the Secretary for War why it is a soldier cannot come upon the married strength until he has reached the advanced age of twenty-six."

That's been altered, I know.

"They might ask the President of the Board of Education about maintenance allowances under the Education Act. They might ask the Treasury why people pay more income tax when



"Butcher's only just been and come with the cabbage and potatoes, Mum, an' 'e says the fishmonger ought to 'ave been 'ere long ago with the meat!"

they are married than when they are living in sin."

That's being talked about again.

Yes; and now, I dare say, something may be done.

It's amusing, isn't it, how all the old income-tax grievances are at last being taken seriously, now that income tax is no longer the privilege of the few?

Yes. Anyhow, that speech was all right. "Assistance—not Statistics," is the line.

Yet the birth-rate still ceases to give satisfaction?

Ah, but there's not enough assistance. And now, I gather, the experts aren't absolutely sure that we *do* want to increase the birth-rate. One chap wrote to *The Times* pointing out that if it was more man-power we wanted we shouldn't get it for eighteen years, when it was just possible the war might be over. And, meanwhile, he said, we were using married women in a hundred and one ways for the war-effort, and if they all rushed off and had babies you'd put hundreds of thousands of women out of the war, because, I think he said, you might reckon that one baby, statistically, was a whole-time job for two women. But, as usual, I can't find yesterday's *Times*, so I may have got it wrong.

I see the point, anyhow.

Then another chappie said that if every married couple did have four children there'd be a simply ghastly excess of human life in these islands. So much so that the death-rate would leap up at once, if you see what I mean. So where are we?

Where are we indeed? Do you know, old boy—I'm sorry if it will upset your cross-section—but I think, after all, perhaps you'd better put me down as a "Don't know." A. P. H.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

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"RHUBARB AND DATE CHEESE—This is useful if you have been able to obtain one of the dates recently available."

Recipe in Scottish Paper.

Why not just frame it and hang it on the wall?

Reduced to the Peerage

IT is just a year since our establishment co-operated with some of the inhabitants of our temporary home-town in an Anglo-Scottish production of *The Mikado*, and an eager public has now once more fought its way through typical Highland snowstorms to see us in *Iolanthe*. I had hoped that in the interval the producer would have forgotten the part I played last year, but though a producer may occasionally forgive he never forgets. He looked searchingly at me and then spoke with resignation.

"You'll want to come in, of course. Let's see—what was that part you did last year?"

"Pish-Tush," I replied, with all the modesty I could feign at a moment's notice.

"Good Lord, yes! I remember. Well, we can't have that again. You'll go in the chorus this time. We'll make you a peer."

This was a bitter blow to my pride, but I soon found sources of consolation. The world-events of the last few months have gone far to convince me that it is better to be a simple British peer, however inarticulate, than the cleverest little Jap from Titipu. And in these days when every man is trying to understand the other man's point of view, often to the complete neglect of his own, an opportunity for an ordinary person like me to study the behaviour of a peer, to assume gorgeous flowing robes and a pose of benevolent hauteur, in moments of emotion to take a bandana from a massive coronet and use it to wipe a brow lined with care and crushed by the heavy weight it has to carry, to face with impassive courage such deadly peril as the wrath of an incensed Fairy Queen—all this must surely help to promote a better understanding between the classes. For the time I practically *became* a peer. When the sentry was absent from his post outside the Palace of Westminster I stepped into his place as any peer would have done. And one night when a cat walked into rehearsal and the producer motioned the House of Lords to the rescue, I walked straight across the room, took the impertinent animal by the scruff of the neck and put it out. I cannot imagine myself doing a thing like that in private life.

Perhaps best of all, I found that a member of the chorus makes more contacts during rehearsals than a principal. For weeks we were never twice arranged in exactly the same way; for weeks I shouldered a different peer and ogled a different fairy every night. For one like myself who has always been modest and diffident this had great educational value. Now, as I walk through the town, I find myself every few minutes fumbling for an absent coronet and making advanced remarks about the weather to half the ladies I meet.

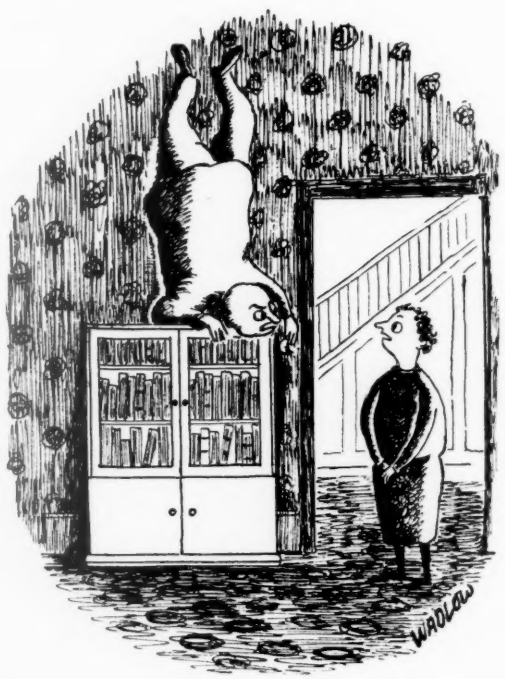
Not that the principals themselves had forgotten me. Charming people all of them, from the Lord Chancellor downwards, their memories of last year were reinforced by the producer's habit of using their *Mikado* names. When he called for Yum-Yum we soon learned that he wanted Phyllis to come on and do some of Iolanthe's part in her absence; and since the Earl of Tolloller responded only to the name of Nanki-Poo, and sang all the men's parts in *Iolanthe* with equal facility, showing an occasional reluctance only to playing his own, most of us had no idea until the programme came out who he was really supposed to be. The name of Pish-Tush of course soon became obsolete, but the principals always had a kindly word and a patronizing smile for me.

After the Thursday and Friday performances I found that the strain was telling on me, and as Saturday happened to be a holiday I decided to spend the day in bed. This turned out to be a disastrous decision. At some time in the late afternoon Providence sent me a clear warning to rise: I had a most realistic dream in which I seemed to wake up just in time to go to the hall and get ready for the show. In my perversity, however, I continued with the dream, which lasted throughout the preliminary stages and the whole of the show itself, so that when I finally awoke after giving a magnificent performance I had wasted—I say this in defiance of accepted scientific theory—a priceless extra three hours in bed. . . . And that was why the astonished Saturday audience noticed among the peers making their majestic first entry—the finest number in *Iolanthe*—one unhappy white-faced specimen feverishly trying to fling his purple cloak over his head. As he reached the front of the stage the intractable garment at last came to rest over his chest instead of his back, and when after further struggles he managed to retrieve his coronet from its folds, he clapped it on his head upside-down and staunchly held it there with its gilt knobs pressed against his temples for a quarter of an hour until a merciful exit relieved his agony.

I found afterwards that the audience approved of this incident, but I was rather embittered by the producer's comments.

"Well done, Pish! Bound to happen, of course. I saw it all coming right from the start of the first rehearsal."

I am convinced that he was—well, exaggerating. The first rehearsal was probably nearly over before he had anything like a clear idea of this unfortunate dénouement.



"What awkward clown put this switch upside-down?"

"Now careful, boys—it costs a lot of money."

Fairly Unsatisfactory

WE had a little excitement in the staff-room the other day. The indigestion and the lack of sleep which always accompany the end-of-term exams. and the feverish marking which follows them had frayed our tempers so that they "flapped" wildly at the least breath of criticism.

At break on Tuesday morning the room was a hive of industry. Suddenly Pringle-Watt broke the unnatural silence with a hollow laugh. "What on earth do you mean by this, Charteris—'Fairly Unsatisfactory—Can do better'?"

Charteris looked up and swore. "That's the *fourth* time I've tried to add Jenkinson's marks. What is it?"

Pringle-Watt repeated his question.

"Well, what's the matter with it?" said Charteris.

"How can anything be *fairly* unsatisfactory?" said Pringle-Watt. "Either it *is* unsatisfactory or it isn't. You can't qualify it."

"Oh, can't I?" said Charteris. "Don't be a pedantic fool! Anyway, I am not aware that I asked *you* to vet my remarks."

"If you *will* write your miserably inaccurate geography comments in the space clearly marked 'Mathematics' what do you expect? I'm afraid I must ask you to scratch your stuff out and do it again in the proper place. But don't put 'Fairly Unsatisfactory'—please!"

Charteris swore again, rather more vehemently.

"Poor—Can do better," said Pringle-Watt, doing his best to annoy.

"Shut up, will you?" said Charteris.

"Disappointing—English needs care," said Pringle-Watt.

"Blast you!" said Charteris.

"Fairly Unsatisfactory," said Pringle-Watt.

This distraction had caused me to write my French marks for 2A in the space reserved for "Next Term Commences . . ." and I was busy with my penknife when a demoniac scream of triumph came from Charteris.

"So *that*'s what it is," he said, addressing Pringle-Watt: "'Writing needs attention.' It has taken me five minutes to make out what your shocking scrawl means." He held up the page for our inspection.

Pringle-Watt turned red, snatched at the report-sheet and tore it into small pieces.

"Fairly Unsatisfactory," said Charteris.

The atmosphere was electric. Both men held their penknives in a grip ominously tight. They glared ferociously at each other for a few minutes while the rest of us sat tense, waiting to intervene. I tried to remember where the first-aid box is kept. Then they resumed their writing and there was silence again.

At length there was an exclamation of disgust from Cartwright. "Who the devil has given that little imbecile Cranmer eighty-five per cent. for geography?" he said.

Pringle-Watt chuckled. "Our friend Charteris, no doubt," he said. "Only Charteris *could* understand the little nincompoop."

Charteris put down his pen determinedly. "I've just about had enough of your impudence," he said. "One more crack and I shall lose my temper."

"Tries hard—but still very weak," said Pringle-Watt.

"Look here . . ." said Charteris, his eyes blazing.

"Tends to lose his head at times," said Pringle-Watt.

"You—you——" Charteris spluttered.

"Moderate—cannot express himself," said Pringle-Watt.

At this point Charteris jumped to his feet and was about to launch a provoked attack when the door of the staff-room opened and the Head looked in. We stood respectfully.

The old boy smiled sympathetically at our labours and said, "Well, how's it going, gentlemen?"

"Fairly Unsatisfactory, Sir," said Pringle-Watt.

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"Gas Manager wanted, working manager for 10 million works."
Advt. in Scottish Paper.

He'd better bring his bicycle.

"Are you SURE *you haven't any cats'-meat under the counter?"*

"You may try to threaten me, but you'll find I'm not to be brow-beetled."

For Land's Sake

IT is only when I study the rules of cricket that the game surprises me. The same with war. I have been reading the *Laws and Usages of War on Land*, an official document which I commend to anybody who has leisure; and I can plainly see now that war requires an umpire. In the past I have considered that umpires ruin a game by being there at all.

As long as two people play tennis alone their conduct is impeccable. In fact they insist on giving points to their opponents which legitimately were theirs. Directly an umpire takes control, however, the players arch their backs and descend to dirty looks, not only at the umpire in respect of his decisions, but at their opponents for cheating and at the white lines for being there.

The best cricket is played on the sands without any kind of jurisdiction except that of the players; if the other fellow is out and declines to go out, you hit him in the eye with the ball. The rules make good reading in book form if regarded as a light type of fiction, but they should be disregarded in play, otherwise they cause confusion between those who know them and those who don't.

Webster's American Dictionary says the wicket-keeper is the man who stands in front of the stumps with a bat. When you come to think of it, he should be. You don't "keep" a light-house by attacking it, and the man who crouches behind the wicket on his haunches hoping to knock it over can scarcely be called the keeper of it. The wicket-keeper surely *is* the batsman.

Well, war is just as surprising. Did you know that we had all agreed, when drawing up the Laws of War on Land, "*not to discharge projectiles and explosives from balloons*"? Here is everybody throwing something, no matter *what* he is being transported on, and this rule doubtless explains why all these gas-filled blimps which decorate the sky are, to the surprise of most people, *unoccupied!* It is no use putting anyone in them if he cannot throw anything out (except a handful of sand when he wants to go higher).

I see from Appendix 8 that a place may not be bombarded "solely on the grounds that automatic submarine contact mines are anchored off the harbour." I do not question the propriety of this consoling condition from the point of view of the inhabitants, but I cannot imagine the glorious Axis waiting for any such excuse before beginning. It is quite enough for them that a few automatic machines are anchored on the pier.

I note that in the event of any of the signatories wishing to denounce the convention they must "*write to the Netherlands Government.*" It does not specify to whom they must write if they wish to denounce the Netherlands Government; and it must have been irritation caused by looking in the book in vain for advice on this point that exhausted Hitler's patience.

Under Article 17 a neutral "*shall not be more severely treated by a belligerent than a citizen of the other belligerent state.*" Perfectly fair reasoning, but it is rather like asking the man who is aiming a series of bottles across a public house bar not to hit an innocent bystander. The best thing for the neutral is to get out of the way quick.

There is something distinctly wistful in the rule that "wilful damage to works of science and art belonging to a neutral" should be made the subject of "legal proceedings," but even this is not more diverting than the primary object of this terrific legal tome, which is "to alleviate as much as possible the calamities of war." This was really a *very* decent idea, but it strikes me as the most fantastic waste of time imaginable. And I am not at all sure that to draw up rules as ridiculous as these did not so tempt the potential contestants as to have become the fundamental cause of the present free-for-all rebellion against them.

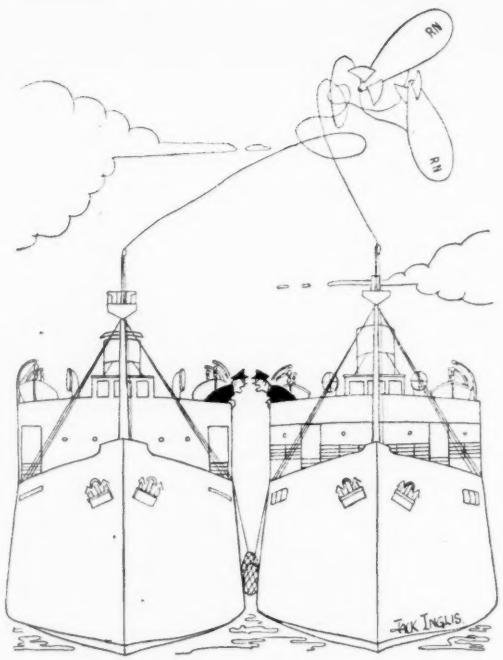
At the Opera

SPRINGTIME IN ST. MARTIN'S LANE

WITH the coming of spring London theatres are bursting into song one after another. *The Maid of the Mountains*, with her tuneful entourage, has taken up her abode at the Coliseum after many years' absence, and happily time seems to have left not so much as one wrinkle on her face. The old melodies have lost none of their sparkle. Here are swashbuckling robber bands hiding among Alpine peaks pursued by a comic Governor (DAVY BURNABY) and dashing officers whose gorgeous uniforms might well be the envy of GOERING himself; a chorus arrayed in peasant finery whose brilliant colours are rivalled only by the luxuriant flora which abound in Ruritania; and the most luscious blonde ingénues looking like animated bon-bons. JOSÉ COLLINS' famous rôle of *Teresa* is played by SYLVIA CECIL, who sings delightfully. The lack of Miss COLLINS' compelling stage personality has, however, made the performance seem a little out of focus; for MALCOLM KEEN (*Baldasarre*) is a robber chieftain quite in the grand style and, owing to her lack of physical and temperamental stature, rather overshadows Miss CECIL, who fails to convince one of the fire and fury of her *grande passion*. Neither does one feel that she is capable of the magnificent vengeful jealousy that would betray her lover and send him to his doom for casting a roving eye at a sweetie-pie who, for all her lusciousness, obviously hails from Kensington. The humour is in the able hands and feet of SONNIE HALE (*Tonio*) and ELSIE RANDOLPH (*Vittoria*), who squeeze the utmost out of the ever-unfunny situation which has been the stuff of comedy since time immemorial—the husband and wife who hate each other. But they do their brilliant best, and very good it is.

On the other side of the street, at the New Theatre, are *Tonio's* and *Vittoria's* Mozartean rivals, *Papageno* and *Papagena*. The Sadlers Wells Opera Company have come back to London after a long migration to the provinces, and gave an excellent performance of *The Magic Flute* on their first night. With the witchery of MOZART and the grace of *Pamina* at her very door, *The Maid of the Mountains* may find more real cause for jealousy than a fluffy blonde.

"3 oz. golden syrup, 1 oz. lemonade powder, 2 oz. sherbet and 4 oz. honey and glycerine lozenges —tell me, just who made out this prescription?"



"YOUR *balloon did it.*"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Theatre

The Scene is Changed, by ASHLEY DUKES (MACMILLAN, 12/6), is, in the author's own words, an account of his journey through theatre. It is aptly put, for, though he was intended for science, soldiered through the last war, and has dabbled in wine, it is in that queer world that his interests always lay. He has been critic, dramatist (GILBERT would have been down on him for calling it "playwright"), producer, and manager of his own theatre. Taking always his zeal for the drama with him, he has travelled widely, and must know about as much as anybody what has happened to the stage for the last thirty odd years. His views are not those of the commercial drama or old methods of production, and readers who go to the theatre for relaxation only and jib at being edified there will find plenty with which to disagree, but he keeps a level head, and objects to boredom and empty pretentiousness no less strongly than they could. Wisely, he makes no effort to cram his book with amusing stories. Occasionally one creeps in. The Shah who refused to go to the Derby because he was aware that one horse was swifter than another will be new to many, and one commends the "probably malicious invention" that the huge "Behold Leviathan" of the English Bible subsides into "Voici l'hippopotame" in the French. J. K.

Katharina Regina

One of the happiest and most entertaining results of Anglo-American neighbourliness is the fresh stand-point induced by the American handling of English history. As readable as FROUDE—and a scholarly counterblast to that great amateur's bluff mendacity—Mr. GARRETT MATTINGLY'S *Catherine of Aragon* (CAPE, 18/-) recounts with extraordinary vividness of detail the career of HENRY VIII's heroic wife: "the most virtuous woman," wrote CHAPUYS, "I have ever met and the highest-hearted, but too quick to trust that others were like herself." How the little girl of seven who saw COLUMBUS lay his wild men of America at her parents' feet became the solitary, threatened impediment of the husband who had chosen her "above all others," is told here as an integral part of the break-up of Christendom. MORE, FISHER, CATHERINE herself, saw it coming. HENRY would willingly have by-passed the Reformation if he could have done so and and got his own way. It fell to a princess of the only Catholic renascence, that of Spain, a Catholic more conscientious than the Pope, to see that he didn't. Had CATHERINE—Mr. MATTINGLY again quotes CHAPUYS—"done a little evil that good might come of it" how different things might have been!

H. P. E.

Nelson's Emma

The production by American authoresses of gigantic historical novels will presumably cease now that American industry is on a war basis. It is therefore possible that Miss BRADDA FIELD'S *Miledi* (CONSTABLE, 18/-) will be the last of the prodigious panoramas among which *Gone With the Wind* has been the most famous. *Miledi* is a romanticized biography of EMMA, Lady HAMILTON, "the true friend of Vice-Admiral Lord NELSON, K.B., Duke of Bronte," to quote from the sub-title. As Miss FIELD has allowed herself only nine hundred and forty-four pages, exclusive of an Index of Characters, which occupies another thirty-five pages, she has not been able to bring EMMA's story beyond the year 1800, by which date, however, her friendship with NELSON was firmly grounded. The book opens with EMMA, a blacksmith's daughter, passing, by no means unscathed, through the perils of life in the London of the late eighteenth century. Ogling aristocrats, whose English is suitably spiced with French, are attracted by her beauty, but Dr. JOHNSON, whom she runs across accidentally, is not. She is a spectator of the No Popery Riots, she sees a cock-fight, she indulges in the new amusement of sea-bathing, she knows Seven Dials in all its squalor, and she sits to ROMNEY. The scene, and EMMA, shift to Naples; Captain NELSON makes his appearance, GOETHE is struck by EMMA's beauty, and a profusion of Italian words—*lazzaroni*, *protetta*, *carlini*, *vetturino*, etc., etc.—helps the reader to remember that EMMA is now luxuriating in the sunny south. Here and there in the Sahara of tedium unrolled by Miss FIELD there is an oasis of real life, in the shape of a letter written by the historical EMMA. But on the whole one cannot help feeling that this book has crossed the wrong ocean, and should have been dropped on Tokyo, not on London. H. K.

Hunt the General

Mr. FRANCIS BEEDING begins his latest novel, *The Twelve Disguises* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6), by ushering us into a war-room where a cheerful and cigar-smoking Prime Minister is discussing with *Colonel Granby* and the Directors of Naval, Military and Air Intelligence the disappearance of a certain *General Creighton* after he had been sent on a special mission to France. *Granby* volunteers to go in search of him and the story of his adventures as a quick-change artist makes thrilling reading even though the nicks of time are rather unconvincingly punctual and Hitler's

French enemies crop up exactly when they are most needed. It will not spoil anyone's pleasure in the plot to say that the *Colonel* is a successful chauffeur, nun, mother, knight-in-armour, corpse and postman, or that he finds the unorthodox *General*. It would not be fair to say what happens subsequently, except that since the day of the *Scarlet Pimpernel* few English gentlemen can have been so elusive and daring and entertaining as these two officers. B. E. B.

Germany, a Prison for Germans?

"I guess I like the Germans as individuals . . . I hate the Nazi Government." Little in Mr. WILLIAM RUSSELL's scrappy, vivid book, half diary, half commentary, occurs to cancel this distinction; and *Berlin Embassy* (JOSEPH, 10/6) has obviously been written to press it home. From 1937 to 1940 its author struggled with the visas of American, and would-be American, citizens and studied the ordinary German people. "Four per cent.," he was told, "are for Hitler . . . six per cent. against . . . and the other ninety per cent. don't care one way or the other." This was before the war; and because that ninety per cent. didn't care then, they lost their power to care later. They didn't want the war—who did, except "politicians and militarists"? But they didn't care enough to delete Hitler, and now Hitler's eternal "*Ich, Ich, Ich,*" was Germany. Modern war, Mr. RUSSELL points out, is the war of cities, fought entirely with mass psychology. When he escaped to the Harz Mountains he found that the honest life persisted, reft of its youth, but with religion, home tradition and the peasant's sound dread of urban exploitation. The peasant, it is true, was dying in the last ditch; but the ditch was still his own. There was still a decent and a modest Germany. H. P. E.

Shots Without Pain

In *Cherry Kearton's Travels* (ROBERT HALE, 12/6), that first-class shot with a camera gives us another heart-warming addition to his long list of books. He is an excellent companion; so is Ernesti, his Buganda boy, who mingled the wisdom of Solomon with devotion and humour during many African journeys—"It would be well if *Bwana* told his countrymen of these wonderful insects [white ants] that they may study their methods and build houses which are stronger and more secure." Ernesti explained the white tail of the otherwise well-camouflaged gazelle: "It is the custom of all white men, to show willingness to surrender by hoisting a white flag . . . these creatures are learning the laws of the white man and gazelle are very wise." One could quote indefinitely from the chapters on Camouflage, Jungle Sounds, Homes Without Hands and Nature Did It First, but this is a book to be read whole and reread and treasured for its wisdom and kindliness as well as for the perfect photographs. B. E. B.

THE RECRUIT'S FAREWELL TO HIS BOWLER

Frank Reynolds, April 18th, 1917

No Bad Blood

"THEY've *asked* for it, and I've *offered* it."

"If they asked for it, darling, I don't see that you could have offered it. You may have *agreed* to it—in fact I'm sure you did—but that's not the same thing. Now, I went of my own accord and said to the Town Hall 'Here I am. Take it or leave it.' "

"And what did the Town Hall say?"

"Dear, that may be sarcastic, but funny it is *not*. Don't mind my saying so, will you? There were all these people in the Town Hall, and nothing whatever to be seen except one card-index after another and a rather bogus sort of a girl with *hair* and *finger-nails*."

"I know what you mean. In Bottleby-le-Marsh it's the Mission club-room and a boy with a stammer, but it comes to the same thing. What he said to me was——"

"Yes, but you *must* hear what happened to me at the Town Hall. 'Here I am,' I said——"

"Don't tell me, let me guess. 'Take it or leave it,' you said. Which did they do?"

"Neither, and yet both, if you see what I mean."

"Of course, dear. It couldn't be clearer."

"If you *still* think it amusing to be sarcastic after all these years, I suppose it's useless to say any more. But this I *will* say! Don't believe them when they tell you that it's all quite simple and you won't mind it a bit and you'll never miss it. As I said to them, a whole pint is a whole pint. And what do you suppose they answered to that?"

"That such an idea had never struck them before. At Bottleby-le-Marsh—"

"Wait a minute, darling. I *must* tell you what happened when I actually went there. You see, what was so awful was that I *trusted* them. I mean, when they said it was all going to be so *lovely*, I believed them."

"How very extraordinary of you, darling. After all, even in the old days of leeches no one ever expected it to be *lovely* did they?"

"I've no idea. Besides, I think that's very literal of you. All I mean is, that I nearly fainted and had to have a cup of tea."

"Do you mean to say it hurts?"

"No, oh no. It doesn't *hurt* in the very least."

"Then it was just the sight of it all?"

"Oh, you don't *see* anything."

"Then was it all the other people?"

"There weren't any other people there."

"Then why did you nearly faint and have to have a cup of tea?"

"Well, darling, I think it was the *idea* of it. That's why I'm warning you."

"But I've had the idea of it already. And when I went to the Mission club-room at Bottleby-le-Marsh they said all the things that you say they said to you and told me to look in any Tuesday afternoon."

"'Look in'! I must say I don't think that was at all a good way of expressing it."

"Neither did I, but I've looked in on Tuesdays, and it's most extraordinary, but the first time the place was shut up and there wasn't anybody in sight, the next time there were the Home Guards drilling, and the last time they simply asked me to come back between eleven and twelve on Wednesday week, which is when I always have the evacuee mothers for their ballet-dancing lesson."

"So I suppose you've given the whole thing up? Well, I don't blame you. And they have hundreds of thousands of donors, and pints and pints and *pints*, I believe."

"That's just what makes me so angry. *What* do they think is wrong with mine?"

"Darling, one can't ever tell. Very likely they'll ring you up in the middle of the night and say you're to go round at once."

"Well, honestly, I *do* think England has her own ways of winning the war."

E. M. D.

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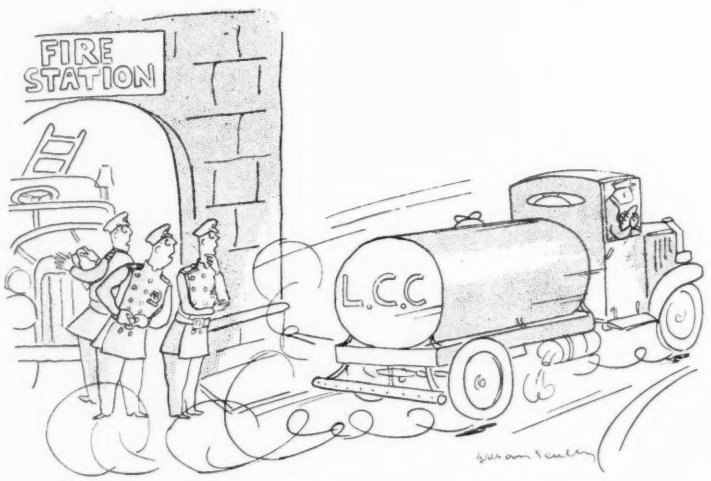

"I wonder where the drought is?"

Success Abounding

MY performance has been received with enthusiasm. The Megthorpe *Sentinel* says: "Mr. Sopwhittle's cartooning reached unexpected heights of drollery. His 'turn' was superb entertainment." The Megthorpe Parish Magazine says: "We are deeply indebted to Mr. Sopwhittle. For fifteen all-too-short minutes he made us forget our troubles."

I cannot understand it. Either the British public is very easily amused or my skill is more pronounced than I had imagined.

Major Griffin was putting on a concert for the troops in the Parish Hall, and he asked me if I would help. Afterwards he laughingly admitted that he solicited my organizing ability rather than any histrionic talent that I might have, but he seemed quite pleased when I told him that I had only a moderate tenor voice, that I

could not juggle or throw cartwheels, but that I had some slight skill with the pencil. After some discussion it was arranged that I should do a turn of fifteen minutes' "lightning cartooning."

I was very excited on the day of the concert—but full of confidence, for I had rehearsed my show to perfection. Each of the three cartoons was scheduled for five minutes, and I chose Coventry Patmore, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Robert Owen as my subjects. It was with regret that I omitted my favourite author Charles Kingsley from the list, but his nose defied all my efforts at *speedy* reproduction.

The first thing that went wrong was the easel. As I strode on to the stage I noticed that it faced the audience. Now I hate having people look over my shoulder while I am at work. I decided to turn the easel round. It was heavy and my exertions, in addition to making me very warm, lost two valuable minutes. I fixed a plain postcard to the board by means of a drawing-pin and began, in bold wristy strokes, to reproduce the physiognomy of Coventry Patmore. I was soon immersed in my task and remained completely oblivious of the audience until I stepped back a pace or two to measure my rough sketch. As I held my pencil at arm's length, first horizontally and then vertically, the first murmurs of approval broke from the throng. I was encouraged.

Soon the cartoon was completed. All that remained to be done was the erasing of construction lines (perspective, etc.), and as ill-luck would have it my rubber was in the very last pocket that I searched. By the time I had located it I was very flustered, for I was already four minutes behind schedule. At last the drawing was completed and I was about to present it to the audience when a horrible thought struck me. Would the people at the back of the hall be able to see the work? A postcard is not very large and my H pencil, while admirably precise, is not particularly bold. I realized that I should have to go over the sketch again and *press on*. This I had commenced to do when the point of the pencil snapped. For some reason or other the audience thought this funny. I left the stage to borrow a pencil-sharpener or at least a penknife. The Major was able to supply me with the latter and I returned to the stage. I was a little upset at leaving the audience so abruptly and without apology, so I explained at some length the reason for my apparent but unintended discourtesy. Judging by the laughter which greeted my speech there were few who nursed their legitimate grievance.

"I'd like a good murder story—for preference one in which no suspicion is cast on the butler."

A few more minutes and I was done. I unpinned the postcard and held it aloft for inspection. There was again much laughter—probably due to the Patmore subtleties recalled to mind by the likeness. The cheering became so vociferous that I blushed, and this caused me so much embarrassment that I bowed more and more deeply as I retreated to resume my work. Then an unfortunate incident occurred. As I bowed for the last time my seat struck a leg of the easel and knocked it backward. This upset the delicate equilibrium of the whole apparatus, so that the board tumbled forward to strike my head with an impact as noisy as it was painful. My number was up and the curtain descended.

Major Griffin has already booked me to repeat the performance in Lower Haddock, Chinton, Fripton and Soddy. I cannot understand it.

Course Commander

SYMPSON and I are no longer sappers. Our proud relatives address our letters "Cadet Sympson" and "Cadet Conkleshill." We wear white bands round our caps, F.S., and white tapes on our shoulder-straps. As possible future officers we have access to those bars in hotels where the feet of sappers may not tread. It is true that there are no hotels within seven miles of this place, but, as Cadet Sympson says, it makes him feel important just to think of it.

"You will be Course Commander to-morrow, Cadet Sympson," said our C.S.M. within an hour of our arrival at Lone Hall camp. "You all take turns at being Course Commander. It is quite simple. You just have to go round the four huts and get everybody up at reveille, and then at 7.25 parade them for breakfast. At 8.15 . . ."

"Perhaps," said Sympson, "I had better write it down."

He did, and filled up two pages with the day's duties of a Course Commander. The prospect of taking charge of so many parades on the first working day in a new camp would have shaken any of us, but for Sympson it was a nightmare. He applied for his commission more than a year ago, before the rule was made that all commission candidates must first hold a stripe. Sympson's arm had remained virgin, and he had not given a single order in the Army.

"You fellows," he said, when we settled down in the barrack-room after tea, "must coach me a bit. Of course I have been drilled a good deal and marched about a good deal since I came into the Army, but I can't say I have ever taken particular notice of the way the orders are given. Supposing, for instance, I have got all the men lined up in front of the huts and I want them to march round to the mess-room for breakfast, what exactly do I say?"

"'J Course,'" said Cadet Hill, who used to be a drill-sergeant, and knows his stuff, "'move to the right in threes —right turn—by the left, left wheel, quick march!'"

Sympson paled.

"It sounds a bit complicated," he said, "with the mess-room only a few yards round the corner. Couldn't I say 'Breakfast, lads,' and leave the rest to their good sense?"

We persuaded him, with some difficulty, that on his first day it might be as well to adhere to conventional Army methods, and the rest of the evening was spent trying to get the various orders into his head. Perhaps we rather overdid it, because at about 1 A.M. he started talking in his sleep, ordering imaginary bodies of men, in a loud booming voice, to "move to the left in sixes," and to "slope breakfasts by numbers."

He looked pale and wan as he stood on the steps opposite our lines, ready to give his first order, and when it came it was uttered in such a faint voice that few of us could hear him. We knew what he meant, however, and he looked both surprised and relieved as we moved to the right in threes, turned right, and left-wheeled by the left.

After breakfast the C.S.M. came into the hut.

"The next parade," he said, "is of course the most important parade of the day. The Colonel will be there, the Major will be there, Captain Layfin will be there, Lieutenant Beejuice will be there."

Sympson muttered under his breath that he supposed Mr. Churchill was busy elsewhere.

"Your capabilities of command," went on the C.S.M., "will be more or less judged by what you do on the next parade."

At 8.15 Sympson tottered outside and mounted the steps, the cynosure of all eyes. We had told him that his breakfast order had been inaudible, so this time he went to the other extreme. He produced a voice like the crack of doom, and told the section commanders to call the roll. He got through the next bit fairly well, and then marched up to the C.O. to report "all present." Instead of making his report in a gentle and respectful voice, however, he gazed glassily into the C.O.'s eye, leaned towards him as he saluted, and bellowed in his ear "ALL PRESENT, SIR!"

The C.O. is a man who has been blown up several times and is not easily disturbed, but he jumped six inches in the air and murmured irritably, "I'm not deaf, Course Commander."

This mild rebuke destroyed the little that was left of Sympson's wits. He went back to the steps and gave the order "Move to the right in threes, etc.," which directed us into the mess-room, instead of "Move to the left in threes, etc." which would have taken us to the lecture hut.

He followed us into the mess-room, and looked round wildly.

"I've done it now," he said miserably. "I shall be R.T.U. for sure."

Captain Layfin came in at that moment, however, and greeted Sympson with a smile.

"Congratulations, Sympson!" he said. "Initiative is a great quality in a young officer. We had foolishly overlooked the fact that H Course were doing P.T. in the lecture hut. It was very smart of you, when you saw them filing in there, to realize that we would have to use the mess-room for my lecture on Organization."

"Not at all, Sir, not at all," said Sympson, with old-world courtesy.

"You may as well come down, Mr. Todcastle; the Air Ministry have decided that your idea of an invisible fighter is impossible."

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